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A. W. H. NEEDLER, *Director*


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CIRCULAR

March, 1947

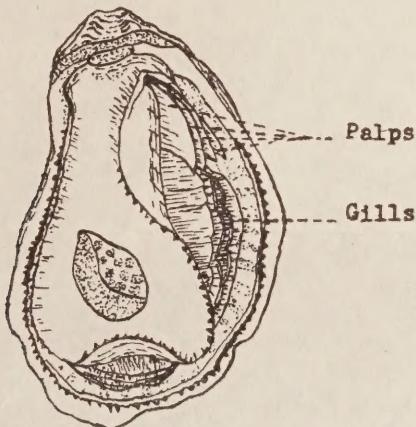
Green-Gilled Oysters are Wholesome

R. R. Logie

Green-Gilled Oysters in the Maritimes

Green-gilled oysters have been found in the United States and are well known in Europe. The occurrence of green-gilled clams and mussels has also been reported. All these have occurred in the Maritimes too and in many cases they have been examined either at the Atlantic Biological Station at St. Andrews, N. B., or at the Prince Edward Island Biological Station at Ellerslie, P. E. I. They have always proved to be of a perfectly wholesome type more commonly found in other parts of the world. In the Maritimes they occur most frequently in Kent and Westmorland counties of New Brunswick but there is no reason why they should not occur anywhere.

How to Identify a Green-Gilled Oyster



The palps and the gills
are the parts that turn green

The green colour is found only in the palps and the gills. To find these parts of the oyster refer to the drawing shown in this paragraph. The colour may range all the way from a pale green to a deep olive shade.

A Green-Gilled Oyster is Good Food

Since the public is still unfamiliar with this type of oyster and since a green colouration often denotes

spoiling of food, these oysters are frequently considered rotten or diseased and are refused by the customer. Actually they are perfectly good food and no ill-effects are caused by eating them.

Cause of the Green Colour

The green colouration is caused by a microscopic green plant eaten by the oyster. At intervals of an irregular number of years this plant may become very abundant in the water of any district. If this occurs at all it is usually in the fall of the year. Under these conditions the oyster consumes so many of these plants that the digestion products turn the gills green.

Considered a Delicacy in France

In certain districts of France, where very high-quality oysters are produced by fattening in special pools, this small plant occurs in abundance and oysters from these regions are consequently often green-gilled. Through years of experience the French oyster-lover therefore associates green gills with high quality and will seek out such oysters as a special delicacy.

Another Type of Greenness

There does occur elsewhere in the world another type of green oyster which has so far not been marketed in this country. In this type the meat is green all over or in streaks and patches on the body and not restricted to the palps and gills. This colouration is caused by the absorption of copper from the water. It has never been shown that this type is harmful, but these oysters, as contrasted with the green-gilled oysters, are said to have a disagreeable taste and continued eating of them might be harmful. Since a careful watch has been kept for them on the Canadian market for many years without finding any, it is doubtful whether they will now appear. If any should be found they should be sent for examination to either of the biological stations mentioned in the first paragraph.

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